

Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

130 East Twenty-second Street, New York City

Bulletin

NEW SERIES, VOL. VII, No. 9

NOVEMBER, 1928

"There is a wall around the town of Boyville," wrote William Allen White, "which is impenetrable when its gates have once shut upon youth. An adult may peer over the wall and try to ape the games inside, but finds it all a mockery and himself banished among the purblind grown-ups. The town of Boyville was old when Nineveh was a hamlet; it is ruled by ancient laws, has its own rulers and idols, and only the dim unreal noises of the adult world about it have changed."

PROGRAM OF SOUTHERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE

DECEMBER 3-4, 1928, AT ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MONDAY, December 3d, 9:00 A.M.

Registration and information desk opens—Y.M.C.A., 145 Luckie Street, N.W.

10:00—*Problems met in developing a child care program in county organization.*

C. C. Carstens, Executive Director, Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

Discussion Leaders: Mrs. Florence S. Adams, Child Welfare Dept., Alabama; Miss Wilma Van Dusseldorf, Department of Public Welfare, Georgia.

12:30—Luncheon. Address—C. C. Carstens.

Fundamental principles of a children's aid program as seen by the Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

2:30—*Joint responsibility of children's agencies and maternity hospitals to develop uniform standards of case work with unmarried mothers and children.*

Discussion Leaders: Lieutenant Colonel Martha Hamon, Southeastern Headquarters, Salvation Army; Miss Emma Hardcastle, Georgia Children's Home Society.

8:00—*The place of the child guidance clinic in a children's program.*

Dr. George Preston, Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, State of Maryland.

TUESDAY, December 4th—10:00 A.M.

Changing emphasis in the institution's program of child care.

As seen by a staff member of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Mr. H. W. Hopkirk, Special Assistant for the Study of Institutional Needs.

As seen by a superintendent of an orphanage, Mr. H. Daugherty, South Georgia

(Continued on page 4, column 2)

INSTITUTION NEWS

A year ago at Bonnie Brae Farm for Boys, Millington, New Jersey, all of the boys had an opportunity to do Christmas shopping. From the earnings which are arranged for by the management of the institution the boys had saved enough money to make their shopping adventure very practical. Many purchases were gifts for younger brothers or sisters or for parents. The rural location of the institution made it necessary to plan special trips to the nearest city. Institutions planning to follow this example should look far ahead in order to provide for the shopping trips with a minimum disruption of the usual Christmas preparations at the institutions.

The Christmas season provides institutions for children with the year's best occasions for entertainments. Tableaux, cantatas, short plays, carol singing (indoor or outdoor), concerts, exhibitions representing educational efforts at school or Sunday School, parties of various kinds, tournaments of checkers or chess, athletic contests and various kinds of inter-cottage competitions can be planned so as to allow children of all ages and conditions to be happy in their achievements. Coming near the middle of the school year the season allows the development of programs in co-operation with school teachers.

Many times we underestimate the dramatic abilities of children. In the November, 1927, issue of the BULLETIN there was a description of Christmas activities at a school for the feeble-minded, the Rome State School, Rome, New York. The program for Christmas week included a cantata by Gounod, seven tableaux and several simple Christmas plays. With the assistance of volunteers with music and dramatics such productions may have considerable merit.

Common sense seems to require city institutions to refuse invitations to immense public dinners and certain types of entertainment at which the children are over-stimulated or exploited by newspapers or commercial organizations. Some institutions have been highly successful in suggesting sensible substitutes for such affairs.

THE CONFERENCE ON
MODERN METHODS OF FUND RAISING
AND ATTENDANT PUBLICITY

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 26-27, 1928

Digests of the discussions during the conference will be presented in series in the BULLETIN. The complete stenotype report is filed in our Library and will be available for circulation. Mrs. Routzahn's discussion is presented first because of its timely value to those conducting Thanksgiving and Christmas Campaigns for funds. We have tried to preserve the color and atmosphere of Mrs. Routzahn's Clinic, but all effort must seem frail to those who heard her. The use of the first person singular marks this article as a direct quotation from the stenotype report.—
EDITOR'S NOTE.

A CLINIC ON APPEAL LETTERS AND MATERIAL—
MRS. MARY SWAIN ROUTZAHN

The material submitted for criticism includes letters addressed to persons whom we may call a "general audience" including some contributors; renewal letters and follow-up letters; annual reports; house organs; and other samples.

Recently I proposed as a slogan for publicity workers, "Start Where They Are." The mind of the person whose support you are trying to get needs to be led from wherever he happens to be in his habits of attention to an awareness of your work as something with which he is concerned. These letters show sincere efforts to start with the readers' interests, but they also illustrate the difficulties applying what might seem to be a simple principle.

For example, this letter evidently intends to bring the reader into the picture:

"My dear Mrs. Warren:

"Try to imagine that you are a sixteen-year-old girl, that your parents are dead or unable to care for you, and that you are earning your way through high school as a mother's helper. All through the school year you have helped two little children dress in the morning; you have hurried home from school to wash the lunch dishes, take the children out, give them their supper, put them to bed, wash the dinner dishes, study your lessons for tomorrow.

"However much you loved these children, however considerate your foster mother was, wouldn't you long for at least one week of vacation with nothing to do but have a good time with other girls your own age?" etc.

I tried to read that at about Mrs. Warren's speed. Let's suppose Mrs. Warren is middle-aged. Can she put herself instantly in the place of a sixteen-year-old girl? More is asked of her. She must at once get the "feel" of a series of circumstances, and be ready to agree when asked: "Wouldn't you long for a vacation

with nothing else to do but have a good time with other girls your own age?"

Another letter asks:

"Have you ever stopped to think what is being done in your county for children whose fathers have died or deserted, and whose mothers are unable to support them without aid? For dependent orphans or for children whose parents have not married? For children whose parents are too vicious and neglectful to be entrusted with their care? For children who need special care or training that cannot be provided in their own homes, etc."

The reader is brought into the picture but not in a favorable light. It seems to be suggested that he ought to stop and think. Would the sentence be improved by asking: "Have you ever wondered what happens to children in your county whose fathers have died or deserted, etc . . . ?" He can say "yes" to that with all his self-respect intact.

Here is an opening which offers the readers a choice of positions:

"When Johnny Jones breaks into a store with a group of other boys and is arrested, do you shrug your shoulders and say, 'What would you expect?' and then forget about it? or have you ever wondered what happened to Johnny after that?"

Another writer talks to the reader thus:

"If we came to you personally with any one of the many instances of neglect, dependency and suffering which necessitate sending children from all points of the county to the Children's Community Center for care, it would be inhuman for you to refuse assistance."

May the reader not resent being told so positively just what he would do? Or that he would be "inhuman" if he refused a certain request? In our efforts to approach the reader on his own ground, we must be sincere, in trying to put ourselves in his place instead of trying to drag him over to our position by telling him to use his imagination. Letters often demand too much of the reader's imagination.

This little story uses another and, I think, a better technique. It presents a situation which the reader easily recognizes. He is carried along to a point at which the questions, "What becomes of these unfortunate persons" are his own. He wants the answers:

"Few of us notice the paragraph tragedies.

"They are on the inside newspaper pages and because of their unimportance are hidden at the bottom of a column or under an ad. Only de luxe misery wins the first page.

"Mary Lee, mother of two children, was sentenced to the House of Correction yesterday for 30 days as a dope addict . . ."

"Routine. Tawdry escapades neither scandalous enough nor adequately violent to merit the

short glory of a photograph on the picture page or the stock sobs of a feature writer. The fate of Mrs. Lee may get a couple of lines; it is just as likely to perish in the waste basket. And yet—

“What becomes of the two children of Mary Lee? What of the three children of the tippling Joneses? Are they left to shift for themselves? What is to become of them? Is life to be an everlasting sordid cycle and the Jones and Lee families perpetual social problems?”

This letter illustrates a problem in the use of case stories:

“Please read this quotation from a little girl’s letter to her sister:

“I guess this means the last of my school days, as pop says I can’t go but one day a week now. Mr. H. says I can’t stop, but it don’t make no difference what he says, because I can’t go and it’s no use trying—and after I get the washing done, I’m so nervous that I can’t keep still and I have to lay down so I can get up and wash some more, and today is another washing day, so you know what I’ve got to go through with again.”

“Alice was 12 years old last July. Her mother died twenty months ago, leaving eight children to be cared for by a shiftless father. Her two older sisters have left home, one to be married, the other to work in the city, and Alice must now be house-keeper, cook and mother to her five younger brothers and sisters, including Albert who is not yet two years old.

“One of our workers, in response to a request from a near relative, has just returned from a visit to this home, located in an out-of-the-way, rural community, where she found Alice pale and rebellious attempting to do the family washing, while her father sat by wondering how he was going to make ends meet and apparently quite unaware that his little girl was being taxed beyond her strength.

“The Society is pledged to the task of securing a more wholesome life for the underprivileged children in this and other homes, but it takes a rather special kind of skill and ability to proceed in such matters so as to promote the ultimate welfare of the child, the family, and the community.

“It is quite likely that you would find yourself at a loss to suggest an adequate remedy for the above situation, much less to carry out a properly devised family plan to a successful conclusion, but by sending us your check in the enclosed envelope, you can help us to finance the kind of social case work in the counties which must be applied to the solution of such problems as these.”

When you reach the end of the letter you have forgotten all of the story except that there was too much washing done. The child doing the family washing stands out because it is a concrete, definite experience, vividly presented. The case story has too many elements, a large family, one sister here; another there; the father shiftless, and so on. To produce a story short enough for a letter out of all those parts calls for much selection as well as skill, practice and time.

The paragraph following the story seems to imply that the Children’s Aid Society is trying to “secure a more wholesome life,” but it is too hard for them.

In the last paragraph the reader is told that he would be at a loss to devise a plan. He ought to know that, but he probably does not, and being told so is not likely to please him.

Seasonal letters show much use of color. One is typed in blue on pink paper. One is printed in dark purple ink on a lighter shade of purple paper. I have doubts about the use of colored paper and colored ink because it seems to me the color itself attracts too much attention, making it harder to concentrate on the message. There is also a question of whether one likes pink or not. Some organizations have used blue paper and later are surprised to find there are people who do not like blue. Perhaps some have that feeling about pink.

Comment: “Actual tests made with different colors have shown that returns were much greater with the same class of people from pink than any other color.”

The purple letter shows too little contrast between the paper and the ink. The letter typed in blue on pink is easy to read.

Here on the cover of a booklet is a contrast between the blue and green which interests you immediately. When you turn to the reading matter on the inside pages you have a light background. A good principle in using color is to take advantage of its attention value without losing readability through lack of contrast and without distracting attention from the text by the insistent demand of the color to be noticed for itself. In the letterhead with baby’s heads sketched in both margins the text is put at a disadvantage by so much decoration and ornament surrounding and cutting through it. The letterhead with one good picture at the top seems to me to have as much attention value and human interest, while the text is easy to read.

Here is a group of printed letters:

Comment: “Aren’t there a lot of people who are saying that today everyone knows the circular letter is fake anyway, why not print it and be genuine about it?”

A printed letter suggests an impersonal attitude. This one looks quite cheap and the shiny paper is not pleasing. I doubt whether it is a very wise form to use.

This group of letters is short. You can see by glancing at the page how pleasing they are to look at. This one in particular seems to me excellent:

“Annual reports of charitable societies are usually drab—depressing. Dealing, as they so often must, with the derelict, the handicapped, the misfits, this is inevitable.

“But the leaflet we are enclosing is buoyant,

THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

President—ALBERT H. STONEMAN, Detroit
1st Vice-President—J. PRENTICE MURPHY, Philadelphia
2d Vice-President—REV. M. L. KESLER, Thomasville, N. C.
3d Vice-President—MRS. LESSING ROSENWALD, Philadelphia
Secretary—MISS JESSIE P. CONDIT, Newark
Treasurer—JOSEPH E. BOLDING, Corn Exchange Bank, New York
Executive Director—C. C. CARSTENS

and of a brighter color. No thanks to us! It is because we are greatly fortunate in caring for the most hopeful beings in the world—children. With children, there is no room for discouragement or for that sense of futility that so often baffles one's desire to be of service. They may be sick they may be 'bad' or unhappy or in wretched surroundings; there is always tomorrow!

"For that tomorrow we are building. Will you once more give us your encouragement and support if you think we are building wisely?"

I think this is quite a stunning letter. It is in line with our own feeling about our work. It has dignity and reality.

Comment: "It may suggest competition with other organizations. All the other fellows' annual reports come in to you looking drab and mournful, but we are fortunate, ours don't come in that way."

It might have been better to say "we" instead of "they" in the sentence "Dealing as they so often must," etc. That would remove any suggestion of criticizing other agencies.

Here is another brief and well-expressed letter. This is a follow-up letter to current contributors:

"Last year the Children's Mission helped 600 children. To grasp the nature of that help, those cold figures must be translated into girls and boys, some timid and bewildered, others full of hope and courage; some sick and helpless, needing the most skillful attention, others strong and confident, wanting only a 'boost' over a hard place; all, alike, clinging to the promise of life, trusting in it, hopeful of tomorrow.

"Let us do our part before it is too late. Today is our responsibility, tomorrow theirs. Will you help us make that uncertain future more secure?"

When I selected these as outstanding letters I did not know who had written them. I have learned since that Mrs. Herrick who is here and wrote them is working professionally on writing letters and so has the advantage of much practice. There seems to me little doubt that steady practice, special ability, and devotion to the task count in writing letters of appeal as in any other work.

(To be continued in December Bulletin)

(Continued from page 1)

Methodist Conference Orphans' Home, Macon, Georgia.

Intake service, Miss Lavinia Keys, Connie Maxwell Orphanage, Greenwood, S. C.

Institutional care and follow-up, Miss Charlotte Leeper, Thornwell Orphanage, Clinton, S. C.

1:00—Luncheon. *Problems met in mothers' aid work in rural communities.*

Miss Lily E. Mitchell, State Board of Charities and Public Welfare, North Carolina.

Headquarters at Ansley Hotel. Rates \$2.50 and up. The luncheon and dinner sessions of the conference are to be held at the hotel. All other sessions are to be held at the Y.M.C.A., 145 Luckie Street, N.W. (two blocks from the Ansley). Any information as to the local plans may be had of Miss Rhoda Kaufman, Executive Secretary, State Department of Public Welfare, 305 State Capitol, Atlanta, Georgia.

THE FINAL LIFT FOR THE NEAR EAST RELIEF ORPHANS

Near East relief is drawing its overseas work to a close. The funds secured through the campaign now in progress will be used to bring to a climax the organization's commitments in Greece, Armenia and the Holy Land. Arrangements must be made so that no child will suffer from the necessary changes. This means that work overseas may not be brought to an end for two or three years more, but after July 1, 1929, the American people will not be asked for further contributions.

The first task of the organization was one of rescue. After more than a million adults and children had been saved for future usefulness, the Americans concentrated on rearing the myriads of orphans who made the land pitiful. More than 130,000 boys and girls passed through the orphanages. Over 30,000 are still America's wards and it is for their benefit that we are being asked for funds.

Some of these boys and girls are still in orphanages. Their future must be arranged for by transfer or placing out. Some are already placed out in homes and must have supervision to make sure they are receiving proper care. Some are placed out in industry or on farms and oversight should be given against unkind employers or the lads' own experience.

This post-orphanage work is of the highest importance. A very real help is given by the Near East League. The members of this organization are boy and girl "graduates" gathered for self-improvement and to give aid to younger orphans. Through such social activities a poised and well-equipped generation is taking its place in the life of the changing Near East. America reared it; America is privileged to give the final lift.

THE PROBLEM CHILD AT HOME: A Study in Parent-Child Relationships. Sayles, Mary Buell. The Commonwealth Fund, Division of Publications, 578 Madison Avenue, New York City, or Baker & Taylor, New York. \$1.50.

"The Problem Child at Home" lays its emphasis on the emotional life of the child and his response to the attitudes of the adults about him. This emphasis of which we have heard much, is especially important for the people in children's work who have been disproportionately impressed with the physical and educational needs of the child. We have felt perfectly satisfied if the child has good food, warm clothing and opportunity for a good education. The Child Guidance clinics have seen unhappy children in the homes of those economically secure and realize the importance of this element which is so difficult to measure, the child's feelings and how they affect even his physical well-being and surely his progress in later life.

Miss Sayles' particular contribution in her book, it seems to me, is that, while stressing the importance of the emotional life, she accepts the original limitations of what might be called germplasm. This balance is necessary for workers dealing with a group of children handicapped not only by the attitudes of their parents but by the background going beyond that of their parents, by economic insecurity, by limited mental endowment. Only too frequently the worker feels failure with a child to be a personal failure, forgetting that some failure is inherent in the original task. But Miss Sayles goes on to say that within these limitations, achievement has a relationship to happiness and satisfaction. So the difficulties of growing up have been stressed without giving us a sense of overwhelming defeat. The importance of the attitude of adults in their relationship to each other and to children have been emphasized without the feeling that every move and action is fraught with impending tragedies.

The book tells of the difficulties involved when parents need too much of their own satisfaction out of the lives of little children and at the same time is more than understanding of the difficulties facing adults who in turn, have limited opportunities for happiness. The results of serious jealousies and antagonisms in childhood, exaggerated parental love, false ideas of sex, mistaken standards of discipline, lack of understanding of the different treatment needed for individual child members of the same family; all of these situations are told in an interesting way and richly illustrated with case material. The case material is given in story form and is an honest presentation of what can be done and what has been left undone. Having stressed the importance of things that parents may do, the book stresses the equal importance of things best not done.

One of the most significant lines in the book is: "Yet freedom to grow without too much adult supervision may fairly be set down as one of the inalienable rights of the child." These words should be before every adult. It takes much more courage to let children grow up without too much supervision than to surround them with walls that will make sure that no physical harm shall ever come to them, forgetting the permanent harm attendant upon too much protection.

This book should be on the book shelf of everyone who deals with children.—MARY E. BORETZ, Home Bureau, Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society, New York.

LET'S MURDER MRS. X

By LEIGH MITCHELL HODGES

Let all of us workers in every welfare field whet our pens and load our typewriters for the belated laying-low of Mrs. X, Mr. A, Miss B, and those other Alphabetics who've been dehumanizing pamphlets, letters, bulletins, circulars and annual reports these many years!

Let's sharpen our sense of values, and wade into the gory work of annihilating this tribe of nonentities which has made tons of our pleas and publicity as appealing as an algebraic formula.

Regardless of time, place or circumstance, let's kill off forever these staring initials that stifle the pulling power of even the most gripping stories of human interest.

Let's show the public, which supports our work, that we can at least match the minds which name Pullman cars and freight and passenger trains. If necessary, let's expel from our ranks those who cannot coin suitable substitutes for Mr. G., Mrs. T., and Miss R.

If a majority of us objects to murder, let's seek relief more peaceably.

Let's ask all fiction writers to stop naming their heroes, heroines and villains, and to initial them.

How charming an assortment of Alphabetics in a romance by Floyd Dell or a novel by Sherwood Anderson! What flavor in a Shavian play wherein the cast ran from G to Q!

If we choose this pacific method, we must beg the publishers for revised editions of Shakespeare, Dickens, and the whole company of immortals.

We must insist on "The M. W. of W.," and reduce Falstaff to Mr. F. We must demand "A.T. of T.C.," and replace Sidney Carton with Mr. C. How eagerly the rising generation would seek Thackeray's masterpiece as "V. F.," and its sparkling heroine as Miss S.!

How heart-compelling would be that finale to "The Christmas Carol"—"And so, as T. T. observed, 'God bless us every one'!"

(Continued on next page)

Every writer who has moved human feelings not only has avoided this inhuman initialling, but has taken pains to make the names of characters "sound" their nature. It has remained for us who deal in all needs and pities and misfortunes to hide those we help or want to help behind the coldest and most meaningless symbols in the language.

Let's murder Mrs. X and her whole brood without delay. It won't be a messy job, after all. It won't be gory at all. For there's no heart in these initials, so they can't bleed!

THE ILLINOIS ADOPTION LAW AND ITS ADMINISTRATION.

By Elinor Nims. 127 pp.

Miss Nims has studied as the editor's preface states "the situation in Illinois with reference to the use of the adoption procedure authorized under the statutes of the state." One chapter is given over to an able discussion of the experiments in adoption legislation in the United States and England and another to the origin and development of the adoption law in Illinois. The author points out that "the problems attendant upon the practice of giving children in adoption arise very largely out of the lack of procedure for bridging the gap between the activities of the social agencies on the one hand, which are concerned with the social consequences, and those of the courts on the other, whose interest has in the past been largely absorbed by the legal considerations." For the purpose of discovering how adoption cases are being handled in Illinois under the present law and what problems arise from this practice, the 812 petitions filed and granted in the Circuit and County Courts of Cook County—the most densely populated county in Illinois—during the calendar year of 1925 were used as a basis of detailed analysis. These petitions involve 857 children. The court records were supplemented by the social histories for cases which had been known to social agencies.

Approximately 51% of the 857 children adopted in 1925 through the courts of Cook County were illegitimate, 47% legitimate, 1% of undetermined legitimacy.

The petitions were studies in two groups: (1) those in which the child was adopted by persons related to him by blood or marriage; (2) those in which the child was adopted by persons unrelated to him.

Relatives adopted about 25% of the children studied—190 legitimate children from 156 different families as compared with 30 illegitimate children from 28 families. Eight—less than one-third of these illegitimate children—were registered with social agencies and only 2 of them were child-caring organizations. This seems to indicate that the adoption of the illegitimate child by relatives is a matter in which social agencies are involved in but a small proportion of cases. Although

relatives seem to be able to handle this problem in a way satisfactory to themselves, kinship is no guarantee of fitness to adopt a child.

Strangers adopted 637 children of whom 404 were illegitimate. One hundred sixty-five of these 637 minors—64 illegitimate—and the persons adopting them were unknown to social agencies. Seventy-two per cent of the 472 children registered with social agencies were illegitimate. Fifty-six per cent of all the children adopted by strangers were under one year at the time of adoption, 87% were under four years of age. These facts indicate that the adoption with which social agencies deal grows largely out of the problem of illegitimacy and that adoption by strangers is largely concerned with young children.

Social agencies of different types and maintaining various standards of case work placed 71% of the 472 children known to them. It is worth noting that considerably less than one-third (approximately 30%) of these children were placed by child-caring agencies, while the largest proportion (approximately 35%) were placed by children's institutions. The two institutions responsible for the largest number of adoptions proceed on the theory that no social investigation is necessary. The facts indicate that "it is no one's responsibility to see that the child has been given a square deal on every hand."

Information concerning administration of the adoption law in a number of other counties in the state was obtained by use of a questionnaire. Although this information did not lend itself to detailed study, it indicates that many of the judges of Illinois have given considerable thought to the problem of adoption and have some ideas on how to correct certain weak points in the law. Their suggestions stress (1) the importance of investigation of adoption cases by the probation service, and (2) the centralization of authority in one court in the county and one administrative agency in the state. The present law of Illinois empowers the Department of Public Welfare to approve the incorporation of all child-caring agencies and institutions; to license all boarding homes and supervise both boarding and free homes; to approve the placing of children from maternity homes and hospitals having maternity wards; to receive reports of all children placed out and to receive the reports of all illegitimate births occurring in hospitals and maternity homes. Provision is already made therefore for centering the control of dependent children with special reference to adoption in the hands of one agency but there is no adequate means of enforcement. Miss Nims believes that all the statutes dealing with children should be brought together into a comprehensive, consistent children's code; that the Department of Public Welfare should be equipped with trained social inves-

tigators; that the courts should be required through amendment of the law "to report the filing of each adoption petition to the Department of Public Welfare and to make the receipt of their recommendation prerequisite to action by the court. The courts would thus be required to exercise a purely judicial function by giving legal effect to the relationship established and approved through the administrative agency."

This inquiry is a valuable addition to the studies already made on the problem of legal adoption.—IDA R. PARKER, Research Worker, Massachusetts Homeopathic Hospital.

MARY E. RICHMOND MEMORIAL MEETING

Since the death of Miss Mary E. Richmond many individuals and organizations have expressed their appreciation of her unique contributions to social service development. A memorial meeting will be held in New York City at the Russell Sage Foundation, at 8:15 P.M. on Wednesday, January 2nd. This date has been chosen because it is understood that several committees which will bring together friends of Miss Richmond from outside New York will meet in New York about that time. The Committee planning the memorial meeting consists of: Mr. Shelby M. Harrison, Chairman, Mrs. Frederic S. Lee, Miss Margaret Rich, and Miss Mary van Kleeck.

CHILD LABOR DAYS

From the National Child Labor Committee, 215 Fourth Avenue, New York City, comes the announcement of special dates for consideration of child labor problems. Saturday, January 26th, is the date set for synagogues, January 27th for the churches and January 28th for the schools and clubs. Individuals or organizations desiring posters and leaflets for distribution, and other helpful material, including a suggested program for use in church organizations, schools and clubs can secure them free of charge from the Committee's New York office.

EASTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

On January 4 and 5 the Eastern Regional Conference of the Child Welfare League of America, Inc., will be held in New York City. On the first day of the conference there will be an afternoon session and a dinner meeting in the evening. On the second day there will be morning and afternoon sessions. A detailed program will appear in the December issue of the BULLETIN. Copies of this program will be mailed as soon as they are ready. Mr. Owen R. Lovejoy is Chairman of the Committee in charge of the conference.

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immediate decision is not so imminent, more frequently sees a way of assuming responsibility for her baby. Establishment of maternity is more often accomplished, the heart-breaks and regrets caused by hasty decisions minimized, and nursing periods prolonged. Children are assured of better and more suitable homes, thus reducing the danger of future delinquency. Foster parents are safeguarded also, being assured of the social background as well as the physical well-being of the child taken into their home. The legal transfer is well guarded, all pointing toward better adjustments.

It is true that many imperfections are apparent in the law, but it is decidedly forward-looking, and the results are encouraging. All departments feel that the cooperation of doctors, lawyers, courts, and laymen speak well for the social consciousness developing within the borders of the State. It undoubtedly has had and will have an increasingly beneficial influence on the treatment of illegitimacy.

NEW MEMBERS

ILLINOIS—The Chicago Orphan Asylum, 5120 South Parkway, Chicago. Miss Ethel Verry, Supt., Class D member.

MICHIGAN—The Whaley Memorial Home, Smith at Ninth Avenue, Flint. Mrs. Mabelle H. Hardwick, Supt., Class D member.

MINNESOTA—The Children's Home Society of Minnesota, 2239 Commonwealth Avenue, St. Paul. Charles E. Dow, Supt., Class A member.

MISSOURI—Methodist Orphans' Home Association, 4385 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis. Miss Myrtle L. Evans, Executive Secretary, Class D member.

NEW YORK—Children's Service Bureau, Inc., 701 Temple Building, Rochester. Miss Winona F. Young, Executive Secretary. Class A member.

New York Nursery & Child's Hospital, Foster Home Department, 161 West 61st Street, New York. Miss Esther Stuart, Director. Class A member.

NORTH CAROLINA—Presbyterian Orphans' Home, Barium Springs. Joseph B. Johnston, General Manager and Treasurer. Class D member.

CHANGES FOR DIRECTORY

PENNSYLVANIA—John Edgar Thomson Schools, Philadelphia, changed to John Edgar Thomson Foundation.

United Charities, Children's Dept., Wilkes-Barre. Mr. Julius C. H. Sauber succeeds Miss Clara J. Van Trump as Executive Secretary.

VIRGINIA—Children's Bureau, Board of Public Welfare, changed to Children's Bureau, State Department of Public Welfare.

ENCLOSURES

(Sent to members only)

IN LOCO PARENTIS. Report for 1927, the Henry Watson Children's Aid Society of Baltimore.

INTER-CITY CONFERENCE ON
ILLEGITIMACY
BULLETIN

*President: DR. GEORGE B. MANGOLD, Los Angeles, Cal.
Vice-President: MISS LOUISE DRURY, Los Angeles, Cal.
Secretary: MISS ELEANOR D. MYERS, St. Louis, Mo.
Treasurer: MISS HERTHA MILLER, St. Louis, Mo.*

**PROTECTING ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN
THROUGH NEW CALIFORNIA ADOPTION LAW**

LAVONNE STANTON, ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
CALIFORNIA CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY

In July, 1927, a new adoption law became active in California whereby greater protection was given to children. This law provides two methods by which a parent or parents may relinquish a child for adoption.

1. A child may be relinquished to an organization licensed by the State Department of Social Welfare, such relinquishment to be acknowledged by the executive secretary or an assistant secretary of the society. In California two societies are licensed for this purpose—the Children's Home Society and the Native Sons and Daughters. These societies maintain a definite standard of work and home investigation, and exercise supervision over the child in the foster home for a given period, usually one year, before giving consent to adoption. At the adoption proceedings, they act in the place of the parent or parents.

2. A parent or parents may surrender a child directly to foster or adopting parents—such surrender or consent to be made on a form prescribed by the State Department of Social Welfare and to be signed in the presence of, and filed with the clerk of, the Superior Court. The clerk must file a certified copy of the form, with the State Department of Social Welfare. It is the duty of the Department to verify the allegations of the petition and to ascertain whether the child is a proper subject for adoption, and to determine whether the foster home is a suitable home for the child, and it shall submit to the court a full report of the facts with recommendations regarding granting of the petition. The State Department is given 90 days in which to make this report. If the mother is in the county where the adoption procedure is heard, she must again appear before the court and give consent.

The State Department of Social Welfare has some very interesting statistics relating to the care of dependent children. It was discovered that prior to the functioning of the new law, child placing organizations handled about one-fourth of the adoptions for the State of California—of the remaining three-fourths, no accurate statistics were obtainable. An estimate based on the records of child placing organizations, indicates

that three-fourths of the children adopted are illegitimate. In a majority of independent actions very little consideration was given to social history or to the fitting of a child into a home best suited to its particular needs. Those needs are arrived at only after careful case study and an equally intimate knowledge of the prospective foster home. Nor could there be a carefully supervised period during which time an error might be rectified. Many babies were placed directly from hospitals; consents were made in blank and acknowledged before a notary; and placing was being done by doctors, lawyers, or friends, the thought being to cover the unfortunate situation as swiftly and completely as possible.

During the first five months of the operation of this law, 244 petitions for adoption were filed with the State Department. From August 29, 1927, to Sept. 21, 1928, the State Department investigated 907 petitions for adoption and 226 were investigated by licensed agencies. That is, approximately 77 per cent were handled by the State Department and 23 per cent by the agencies.

Relinquishments are now being filed with the State Department with but little delay and the department is daily learning of children to be placed for adoption, whereas under the old law little was known of the hundreds of children placed in family homes by independent agencies or persons. The new law places a heavy burden on the state but excellent results are rapidly being obtained. Nevertheless the length of time allowed for reporting on a petition should be increased.

Because of the new law, the cooperation of hospitals, doctors, and laymen is being obtained. The State is constantly urging that an ever increasing number of adoptions go through a licensed agency, and the findings of the State Department are strong arguments for this course. It is very difficult to remove a child from a home in which it has been placed by the mother or interested friends if it has remained for several months, since a natural attachment has developed. In several instances it has been necessary for the State to urge the removal of the child, and in every case the court in which the petition for adoption has been filed accepted the recommendation of the Department.

During the last year the work of the child placing organizations has increased at least fifty per cent. Their policy is to give the mothers of illegitimate children as well as parents of legitimate children, at least a month's time in which to work out a plan for the child. They urge a nursing period and assist in making this period possible.

An increasing number of children are being returned to the parent or parents or adjusted with relatives as a direct result. The unfortunate girl, feeling that due protection is being afforded her, and that the urge of an

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